

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 DHA-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-02  
INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 PRS-01 SP-02  
SS-15 USIA-15 /075 W  
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R 311550Z AUG 77  
FM AMCONSUL BELFAST  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1762  
INFO AMEMBASSY DUBLIN  
AMEMBASSY LONDON

UNCLAS BELFAST 275

E.O. 11652: N/A  
TAGS: PINT, US, UK  
SUBJECT: REACTION TO PRESIDENT'S STATEMENT ON NORTHERN IRELAND

1. PRESIDENT CARTER'S AUGUST 30 STATEMENT ON NORTHERN IRELAND,  
AND REACTION TO IT, DOMINATED THE BELFAST MEDIA. THE  
STATEMENT WAS REPORTED STRAIGHT, BUT COMMENT REFLECTED  
LOCAL POLITICAL VIEWS.

2. UNIONIST REACTION TENDED TO BE TEPID. LEADERS APPEARED  
TO SHOW SOME CONCERN AT THE STATEMENT'S TENOR, BUT THEY  
PROBABLY WERE RELIEVED THAT IT WAS OF A DIFFERENT  
TYPE THAN RECENT SPECULATION MIGHT HAVE LED THEM TO  
ANTICIPATE. OFFICIAL UNIONIST PARTY LEADER HARRY WEST  
SAID THAT IN CALLING FOR A JUST AND FAIR SETTLEMENT THE  
PRESIDENT IN EFFECT HAD ENDORSED PARTY POLICY. WEST  
WELCOMED THE PLEA FOR AN END TO AMERICAN ENCOURAGEMENT OF  
VIOLENCE, AND THE SUGGESTION OF INVESTMENT, BUT SAID INVESTMENT  
COULD NOT AWAIT A POLITICAL SETTLEMENT. ANOTHER OFFICIAL  
UNIONIST NOTED FAVORABLY THAT THE PRESIDENT HAD NOT REFERRED  
TO POWER SHARING, BUT STILL ANOTHER (HAROLD MC CUSKER)  
SAID "HE IS JUST ANOTHER INTERFERING OUTSIDER."  
BELFAST'S NEWS LETTER DAMNED THE STATEMENT AS MERELY "WELL  
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MEANING" AND EMPHASIZED MAJORITY RULE.

3. PETER ROBINSON OF PAISLEY'S DEMOCRATIC UNIONISTS  
STRESSED THE BALLOT BOX AS THE WAY TO A SETTLEMENT (I.E.  
STRAIGHT MAJORITY RULE). VANGUARD PARTY LEADER WILLIAM  
CRAIG FOUND LITTLE POINT IN THE STATEMENT, SINCE "NO PROGRESS  
CAN BE MADE" IN THE ABSENCE OF A POLITICAL FRAMEWORK

PROVIDED BY THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT.

4. OTHER COMMENTS WERE WARM. SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC AND LABOUR PARTY LEADER JOHN HUME SAID CARTER HAD SHOWN WHAT THE REAL PRIZE OF AGREEMENT COULD BE - THE ERADICATION OF SERIOUS SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC ILLS. HE OPINED THAT THE "GENEROUS OFFER," CLEARLY RESULTING FROM IRISH-AMERICAN POLITICAL LEADERS, DEMONSTRATED THE POSITIVE INFLUENCE OF "THE IRISH DIMENSION" ON THE NI QUESTION. OLIVER NAPIER OF THE ALLIANCE PARTY SAID THE PRESIDENT HAD "STUDIOUSLY AVOIDED THE PITFALLS OF N.I. POLITICS," AND WELCOMED THE INVESTMENT PROSPECT. AND CIARAN MC KEOWN OF THE PEACE PEOPLE IDENTIFIED THE STATEMENT AS IN LINE WITH THE POSITION THE PEACE PEOPLE HAD EXPRESSED IN THE U.S. RECENTLY - THE USG SHOULD NOT INTERFERE DIRECTLY BUT "BE READY TO HELP US WHEN A SOLUTION EMERGES." FINALLY, BELFAST'S IRISH NEWS SPOTTED PRESIDENTIAL SUPPORT FOR POWER SHARING. ITS EDITORIALIST WAS CONCERNED THAT THE LOYALISTS WOULD THEREFORE REACT IN AN "INTOLERANT AND OBSTRUCTIVE" WAY. IT CONCLUDED : "PRESIDENT CARTER HAS CONFRONTED OUR PROBLEM IN A REALISTIC WAY. LET THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT AND THE LOYALISTS DO LIKEWISE."

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## Message Attributes

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